

NSC BRIEFING

23 December 1953

SOVIET STATEMENT IN ANSWER TO
PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S UN SPEECH

I. The USSR announced its readiness to participate in "confidential or diplomatic talks" on the President's proposal. It appears to represent a serious attempt to answer the proposal and it refrains from using the usual vituperative propaganda against the United States. However, the USSR expects the United States to "give necessary explanations" of parts of the proposal that are "not clear":

- A. The President's proposal does "not provide for the necessity to ban atomic weapons."
- B. It does not provide for a "pledge not to use this weapon."

II. The Soviet Government expects to present its own proposal during the forthcoming talks for simultaneous consideration with the President's proposal. The Soviet proposal asks:

- A. The signing of an "international agreement" consisting of "unconditional pledges" not to use atomic, hydrogen or other weapons of mass extermination.
- B. The simultaneous establishment of "a strict international control which would assure the fulfillment of the agreement on the ban."

III. The 3000-word statement answering President Eisenhower's speech was softer in tone, but it recapitulated Soviet disarmament proposals which in general call for the "prohibition" of atomic weapons before the enforcement of effective controls.

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IV. The failure to offer a significant alternative to previously stated positions suggests the forthcoming talks may become bogged down on basically the same issues as they have in the UN.

V. The Soviet proposal may be an attempt to gain propaganda advantage and some initiative from other governments concerned before they have stated a position.

VI. The Soviet statement cited the 1925 Geneva Protocol:

- A. It recalled that the 1925 Geneva Protocol "banning" the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons prevented the use of such weapons in World War II.
- B. The "positive importance" of the Geneva Protocol should "also apply fully to the atomic and hydrogen weapons."

VII. Regarding the role of Communist China, the statement maintained that the UN Charter assigned special responsibility for the preservation of peace to the five powers including the Chinese People's Republic.

- A. The statement does not indicate, however, that Communist China must be included in the forthcoming talks on the problem of controlling atomic and hydrogen weapons.
- B. Communist China should be represented in the UN.
- C. A rapprochement must be reached among "the five great powers" on the question of ending the atomic armaments race as well as the race in all other armaments."

VIII. The statement is critical of the President's proposals:

- A. Only "some small part" of atomic materials would belong to

the international agency, thus leaving the "main part" of the materials to be used for further production of atomic and hydrogen bombs.

1. Such a proposal would "directly sanction the production of atomic weapons."
2. The "whole mass of atomic material must be directed toward peaceful purposes."

B. The President's proposal "in no way limits the possibility of the use of the atomic weapon itself," and the necessity of its "prohibition" is not mentioned in the President's speech.

1. The threat of an atomic war "cannot be eliminated without the prohibition of the atomic weapon."